

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 5134

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IR
SUBJ: SHAH WOOS THE CLERGY

1. AS OF MAY 28 SHAH AND EMPRESS ARE MAKING ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE TO HOLY CITY OF MASHAD. ACCOMPANIED BY GREATER THAN NORMAL PRESS AND TV COVERAGE, SHAH SPOKE TO CLERGYMENT AT THE HOLY SHRINE OF IMAM REZA ON FIRST DAY OF VISIT. THEME OF SHAH'S MESSAGE WAS WARNING THAT THREAT TO THE SECURITY OF IRAN COULD ALSO POSE THREAT TO IRAN'S ISLAMIC HERITAGE: "IF THIS COUNTRY IS PRESERVED IN A STRONG POSITION, IT WILL AUTOMATICALLY ASSIST THE SPREAD OF OUR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS." SHAH ALSO REVIEWED PROGRESS ON RELIGIOUS FRONT MADE SINCE ADVENT OF PAHLAVI DYNASTY CITING EXAMPLES SUCH AS RESTORATION OF IMAM REZA SHRINE AND HIS OWN "DEEP INTEREST IN RELIGION AS WELL AS HOW I RUN THE COUNTRY."

2. IN RESPONSE TO SHAH'S ADDRESS, MASHAD CLERGY GAVE THEIR ASSESSMENT OF PROBLEMS CONFRONTING IRANIAN YOUTH. ACCORDING TO THE CLERGY, THE YOUNGER GENERATION DOES NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT UNDERSTANDING OF TRUE PRINCIPLES OF ISLAM AND THE MASS MEDIA AND EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM MUST BE MORE RESPONSIVE TO STEER PUBLIC AWAY FROM CORRUPT VIEWS AND UNETHICAL ATTITUDES.

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3. ON SECOND DAY IN MASHAD SHAH SPOKE TO WORKERS AT IRAN NATIONAL AUTOMOBILE SPARE PARTS COMPLEX. SHAH REFERRED TO EXPANSION OF INDUSTRIAL OWNERSHIP BY WHICH FACTORY WORKERS ARE ENTITLED TO BUY SHARES OF THEIR FACTORIES (319 OF 1,000 WORKERS ARE SHARE HOLDERS AT MASHAD PLANT). URGING WORKERS TO LEARN ABOUT CONDITIONS IN OTHER COUNTRIES, HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD FINANCE TRIPS ABROAD FOR

WORKERS TO COMPARE FOR THEMSELVES.

4. COMMENT: ANNUAL MASHAD TRIP GAVE SHAH OPPORTUNITY TO PURSUE HIS "OPENING TO THE RIGHT" CAMPAIGN TO MOLLIFY CONCERNED CLERGY. PROMINENTLY PUBLICIZED RECEPTION WITH "TENS OF THOUSANDS" LINING FLOWER-STREWN ROUTE FROM AIRPORT TO SHRINE AND HEAVY COVERAGE OF EMPRESS IN FULL LENGTH CADOR GARB WILL NOT BE LOST ON ISLAMIC COMMUNITY IN OTHER PARTS OF IRAN. ONE INTERESTING FACET OF SHRINE VISIT WAS "EXCHANGE OF VIEWS" BETWEEN SHAH AND ISLAMIC LEADERS. ALTHOUGH NEITHER TOLD THE OTHER ANYTHING NEW, AT LEAST A DIALOGUE IS UNDERWAY.
SULLIVAN

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